

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ASBESTOS**

### **A Homeowner's Guide**

#### **1. Question: What Is Asbestos?**

Asbestos, once known as the "miracle mineral," is the name of a group of naturally occurring minerals. These minerals separate into very long, thin, durable fibers which make its use very attractive for industrial use. This mineral can be found in many different forms throughout Canada, Russia, South Africa, and in the United States. The three most commonly used forms in commercial applications are *chrysotile* (white asbestos), *amosite* (brown asbestos), and *crocidolite* (blue asbestos). Asbestos is known for its insulating properties, soundproofing, anti-corrosiveness, condensation control, its strength enhancing properties, and resistance to heat and fire.

#### **2. Question: Where Can Asbestos Be Found?**

Asbestos can be found in most homes built or remodeled prior to 1979. Asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM) may vary between 1% and 100% in asbestos content. There are approximately 3600 asbestos containing products. Some of the most common ones found in homes are listed below:

- Vinyl-asbestos floor tiles and asbestos backed linoleum, resilient floor covering and mastics
- Asbestos-Cement Roofing and Siding Shingles
- Sprayed on ceilings between 1945 and 1978 ("popcorn")
- Wall and ceiling joint compounds before 1977
- Insulation on boilers and water heaters, pad under furnace
- Textured paints before 1978
- Roofing felts and tars
- Pipe insulation between 1920 and 1972 (can be preformed insulation, paper wrap, tape or plaster)
- Asbestos insulated wiring
- Fuse box liners and stove door gaskets
- Artificial fireplace ashes and logs before 1977

#### **3. Question: Does Asbestos Pose Any Health Threats To My Family?**

Homeowners should be very careful not to disturb Asbestos-containing material (ACM) when renovating or making repairs. When ACM is crushed or pulverized, asbestos fibers are released into the air. Asbestos fibers can remain suspended in the air for extended periods of time, increasing the risk of inhalation. Once these fibers are inside the body, they remain there for years, perhaps leading to asbestos-related diseases such as asbestosis, lung cancer, and

mesothelioma. Studies indicate that by far the majority of individuals with asbestos related diseases have been people in the business of manufacturing, and/or installing and removing asbestos products. People exposed to small amounts of asbestos may not develop any related health problems, however, there is no "safe" level known; therefore, exposure to friable asbestos should be avoided as much as possible.

#### **4. Question: How Can I Reduce The Risk of Exposure In My Home?**

Under most circumstances asbestos in good condition should be left alone. ACM that is not crumbly or damaged poses little or no risk. LDEQ does not regulate asbestos from single dwellings to 4-plex residential structures, however, if you as a homeowner must remove ACM, LDEQ recommends that you research best management practices such as containment and adequately wetting the asbestos materials to reduce exposure to you and your family. We recommend that you obtain and review materials on handling asbestos. Some of these materials may be found on the [EPA website](#).

By sufficiently wetting these materials and keeping them wet during all demolition and handling activities, the homeowner can reduce the possibility of releasing asbestos fibers. In addition, such materials should not be crushed, pulverized, abraded, grinded or sawed. For further information, you may also consult the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) web site, guidelines for Personal Protective Equipment.

You may also use a licensed asbestos abatement contractor and insist they use emission control procedures. Even though homeowners and contractors hired by homeowners to perform removal of asbestos from a single residence are not regulated by the LDEQ, homeowners may still hire licensed asbestos abatement contractors to perform removal of asbestos. A list of Licensed Asbestos Contractors may be found at [Louisiana State Licensing Board for Contractors \(LSLBC\)](#). Licensing for asbestos abatement is under the Commercial license with a specialty in Asbestos. You may obtain additional information for licensing by following the attached link to the LSLBC website or by calling (225) 765-2301.

**For do-it-yourselfers, or if you are a single dwelling homeowner and hire a general contractor to perform the work, the following precautions should be taken to minimize the health risks for you and your family:**

**WHEN STRIPPING** away ACM, remove whole pieces or ensure that the fragments are as large as possible.

**WET** the materials that are being removed, cut or drill with soapy water mists from spray bottles.

**PLACE** the material that is removed and the debris in heavy duty plastic garbage bags and tie bags carefully. Goose-neck tie the bags, and double bag.

**DO NOT USE** a vacuum cleaner to pick up dust unless it is a HEPA vacuum made for asbestos removal. Asbestos fibers are so small that they can pass through normal vacuum cleaner filters and become airborne.

**CLEAN** the room or work area with wet mops, sponges, or disposable wet wipes. Repeat a second time. Rinse the mops and sponges in running water in a sink or basin with a drain. Dispose of contaminated mops heads, etc. in heavy duty plastic garbage bags.

**NEVER SAND** Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM), especially slate type asbestos encased in concrete, vinyl-asbestos tiles or linoleum, and avoid sawing, crushing, grinding, etc. If you are uncertain whether or not your home contains asbestos-containing materials, a small bulk sample may be wetted, placed in a double zip locked plastic freezer bag and submitted for analysis to an environmental laboratory. See Environmental Laboratories in the Yellow pages.

You may also hire an accredited asbestos inspector from the list on the LDEQ Asbestos web page, which can be found at: <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2883/Default.aspx>. Scroll down to the “**Louisiana Asbestos Accreditation Lists by Discipline**” header, and open the Asbestos Inspectors list. These inspectors are trained and accredited to use proper sampling techniques.

#### **5. Question: How Do I Dispose of the Asbestos from my home?**

Asbestos in single family dwellings do not fall under state air quality regulations covering asbestos removal. However, you should minimize any risks by using water and minimize breakage to minimize your health risks while removing, bagging, and transporting this type of waste material, or the material may be brought to the landfill by bulk in a lined truck or lined trailer, or bagged in heavy duty leaf or other heavy duty trash bags. See the response to # 4 above.

In Louisiana, a homeowner that removes asbestos shingles and siding from his home is regulated by the LDEQ for solid waste disposal requirements. This type of material shall be disposed in a permitted Solid Waste Landfill that is allowed to accept non-regulated asbestos containing material, such as a Construction and Demolition (C&D) debris landfill that has a plan to manage this waste, or a Type I or II landfill. See link for Solid Waste permitted facilities in Louisiana, at: <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/259/Default.aspx>. You may want to contact the landfill representative prior to bringing in bulk.

In addition, a list of Louisiana recognized asbestos landfills that accepts regulated asbestos containing material (RACM) can be found on the LDEQ Asbestos web page which can be found at: <http://www.deq.louisiana.gov/portal/tabid/2883/Default.aspx> under the heading “Louisiana Recognized Asbestos Landfills”. By obtaining knowledge about the ACM in your home, precautions can be taken to avoid exposure before disturbing the materials. You may also contact the LA Department of Environmental Quality at 225-219-0789 for other appropriate guidance measures to protect yourself from being exposed.

#### **6. Question: I have a house with asbestos siding and shingles that I would like to move to a new location. Do I have to notify anyone that I’m doing this?**

LDEQ regulates the proper disposal of asbestos. As long as the asbestos containing material is in good condition and is secured on the house, regulations do not cover transportation for moving a residential structure. To ensure that shingles and/or siding are secure, wrap the house in polyethylene or similar lining prior to transport.

#### **7. Question: Are there any codes prohibiting the replacement of asphalt roofing shingles or transite siding?**

No, there are no codes prohibiting the recycling or replacement of that type of material. However, the material is hard to find. In speaking with roofers, be sure that the tabs to fasten the shingles on the roof are on the shingles when purchasing this material.

For more information, you may contact the LDEQ, Permit Support Services Division at [Jodi.Miller@la.gov](mailto:Jodi.Miller@la.gov) or 225-219-0789.

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